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RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1044
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0710
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE 0265
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NOUAKCHOTT 000378

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SUBJECT: HERDING CATS: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DAKAR
FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT MOVES AHEAD SLOWLY

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 369

Classified By: Ambassador Mark M. Boulware for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: The tentative agreement reached in Dakar was signed June 4 in Nouakchott by the three major sides to the crisis in a sometimes raucous ceremony. After a meeting with President Abdallahi in Lemden on June 6, International Contact Group members and representatives of the three political sides gathered at UN Headquarters in Nouakchott June 7. Progress was good, but slow, and several outstanding issues remain. Nevertheless, a national unity government is scheduled to be finalized late on June 8. End summary.

12. (SBU) The signing: The tentative agreement reached in Dakar on June 2 (Reftel), was finally signed June 4 in Nouakchott at the Palais de Congres. Ambassador Boulware attended the delayed, disorganized, and sometimes discordant ceremony. A group of female Aziz supporters (bussed in for the occasion) frequently drowned out the multiple speakers from International Contact Group organizations and the three sides to the crisis (General Aziz, Ahmed Ould Daddah's RFD, and the FNDD). On several occasions Aziz had to leave his seat on the stage to exhort a minimum of decorum from his followers. Only Senegalese President Wade commanded a respectful silence during remarks that highlighted the importance of the occasion, and that were generous in their praise of President Abdallahi and the leaders and representatives of the three political sides. Wade urged that the spirit of compromise that prevailed in Dakar be maintained, and that political actors work toward genuine national unity. After drawing lots, the Chinese Ambassador spoke on behalf of the UNSC P5.

13. (SBU) Visit to Lemden: On June 6, mediators and International Contact Group members (with the Chinese Ambassador still representing the UNSC P5) traveled to Lemden to see President Abdallahi. They officially presented Abdallahi with a copy of the accord, and discussed how to put it into effect.

14. (SBU) The talks: Ambassador Boulware attended a day-long meeting of representatives from the International Contact Group on June 7 at UN Headquarters in Nouakchott. The group was chaired by the African Union Ambassador to the EU, and

included the UNDP Resident Representative, the EU Commission Representative, and Ambassadors from Senegal, France, Germany, and Spain. Attendees who had not traveled to Lemden were briefed on the visit and advised that President Abdallahi expressed two preconditions he wanted fulfilled before signing the decree establishing the national unity government. First, the High State Council should be dissolved. Second, the ceremonial signing should take place at the Presidential Palace. German Ambassador Eberhard Schanze, also representing the EU Presidency, opined that these conditions might be difficult to arrange, and wondered if there should not be a "Plan B" if Abdallahi did not compromise. Ambassador Boulware underscored that for the USG, Abdallahi's role was essential and constituted a fundamental part of the accord. The AU chair noted that in any event, such questions were being handled at President Wade's level for the moment. (Note: The High State Council was formerly the ruling junta, but after General Aziz's resignation it has been nominally restricted to a purely security role under General Ghazouani. End note.)

15. (SBU) Ministerial allocations: Representatives from the three sides to the crisis also joined the discussions: Aziz's camp was represented by Campaign Director and former Finance Minister Sid'Ahmed Ould Raiss, the FNDD was represented by co-leader and UFP president Mohamed Ould Maouloud, and Ahmed Ould Daddah's RFD party was represented by Mohamed Abderrahmane Ould Moine. The group made good, though slow progress towards assigning ministerial posts to the three sides. Although the accord specifically provided

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that Aziz's group would name the Prime Minister after consultation with the opposition parties, and that the opposition parties would name the ministers of Interior, Finance, and Communication, it did not specify exactly what positions constituted the government. There was specific concern about three ministerial-level positions that were not members of the Council of Ministers; in particular, the activities of the Commissioner of Food Security could easily be politicized, they maintained. There was also disagreement about the division of the four ministries deemed to constitute "Ministries of National Sovereignty" -- Interior (assigned to the FNDD/RFD by the accord), Justice, Defense, and Foreign Affairs. Raiss argued that the ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs needed continuity and had little involvement in elections and should therefore stay in the Aziz camp. After breaking for a few hours for consultations, consensus was reached in the evening on the distribution of the 28 ministerial positions, with Defense (surprisingly) and Interior allocated to the FNDD/RFD, and Justice and Foreign Affairs allocated to the Aziz camp.

16. (SBU) Next steps: Political representatives promised that when the group reconvened on June 8, they would have names for all the ministerial positions, including the Prime Minister. The question of the Commissioners (primarily Food Security, but also Human Rights and Private Investment) remains open, and the political groups appealed to the International Contact Group for ideas about how to ensure political neutrality in their activities. After the political groups departed, International Contact Group representatives discussed several ideas, particularly the assignment of technical experts to monitor the implementation of agreed upon work plans.

17. (SBU) The preliminary allocations for the ministerial posts are as follows. (Note: "UPR" is Union Pour la Republique, the political party formed in the wake of the coup in support of Aziz. End note.)

Ministry of Justice - UPR and its allies
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation - UPR and its allies
Ministry of Defense - FNDD/RFD
Ministry of Interior and Decentralization - FNDD/RFD

Ministry of Economy - UPR and its allies
Ministry of Finance - FNDD/RFD
Ministry of Education - UPR and its allies
Ministry of Islamic Affairs - FNDD/RFD
Ministry of Employment and Civil Service - UPR and its allies
Ministry of Health - FNDD/RFD
Ministry of Petroleum and Energy - FNDD/RFD
Ministry of Fishing and Maritime Economy - UPR and its allies
Ministry of Commerce, Crafts, and Tourism - UPR and its allies
Ministry of Housing, Urbanism, and Territorial Administration - FNDD/RFD
Ministry of Rural Development - UPR and its allies
Ministry of Transportation - FNDD/RFD
Ministry of Hydrology - UPR and its allies
Ministry of Industry and Mines - FNDD/RFD
Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sport - UPR and its allies
Ministry of Communication and Parliamentary Relations - FNDD/RFD
Ministry of Social, Children, and Family Affairs - FNDD/RFD
Ministry of Environment - UPR and its allies
State Secretary of Modernization and Information Technology - UPR and its allies
State Secretary of Professional Training - FNDD/RFD
Secretariat General of the Government - UPR and its allies
State Secretary of Maghreb Affairs - FNDD/RFD
Secretariat General of the Presidency - FNDD/RFD
Minister Counselor to the President - UPR and its allies

18. (SBU) Talks resumed June 8 but even with the opening postponed for two hours, the FNDD and RFD were not ready to present names for the ministries allocated to them nor had

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Aziz's camp yet been able to complete the required consultations on their selection for Prime Minister. Ould Maouloud did, however, report that he had confirmed with President Abdallahi that he was ready to sign the decree naming the government, but asked that he be given reasonable advance notice. The contact group met separately with Aziz's representative and those of the FNDD and RFD to explore concerns about the activities of the three commissioners. The group found a common interest in ensuring neutrality during the transition period. All agreed to meet again during the evening at which time political groups were expected to bring names for all ministerial appointments and the contact group promised a written proposal to deal with the commissions. In departing RFD representative advised that he expected difficulties with the nomination for Prime Minister given his understanding that Aziz intended to propose that current Prime Minister Laghdaf be carried over into the unity government.

19. (C) Comment: The agreement, though officially signed, remains tenuous. Implementation is difficult because some aspects of the agreement remained verbal or vague. There is still much pushing and pulling from the different parties to the crisis that could potentially lead to a stalemate. We have not "crossed the river yet" but the prospects still seem positive if the parties keep acting in good faith and in the interest of the country. Many Mauriticians have stressed the crucial role of the international community and particularly the United States in "accompanying" the agreement implementation process and ensuring it goes smoothly. End comment.
BOULWARE